

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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BRUSSELS ASLO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, DA
SUBJECT: DANISH FOREIGN MINISTER TO RESIGN

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER K.B. ANDERSEN WILL RESIGN JULY 1
TO BECOME SPEAKER OF THE DANISH FOLKETING. PRIME MINISTER ANKER
JORGENSEN WILL TAKE OVER THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO BETWEEN
JULY 1 AND SEPTEMBER 1 WHEN A NEW FOREIGN MINISTER IS EXPECTED
TO BE APPOINTED. END SUMMARY.

2. TODAY'S (JUNE 2) MIDDAY RADIO NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANDERSEN'S
RESIGNATION LARGELY CONFIRMED SPECULATION IN THE DANISH PRESS OVER
THE LAST WEEK OR SO. ANDERSEN, WHO IS 63 AND PHYSICALLY WORN
DOWN BY HIS NON-STOP PACE, WILL TAKE OVER AS FOLKETING SPEAKER
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FROM THE 70-YEAR OLD KARL SKYTTE, A FORMER LEADER OF THE RADICAL
PARTY WHO HAS HELD THIS POSITION SINCE 1968. SKYTTE ANNOUNCED
A NUMBER OF MONTHS AGO THAT HE PLANNED TO STEP DOWN. ANDERSEN WILL
ACTUALLY BECOME SPEAKER ONLY UPON THE REOPENING OF PARLIAMENT IN
OCTOBER.

3. THE DEPARTURE OF ANDERSEN, ALWAYS AN OUTSPOKEN, COLORFUL

AND CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE, FROM ACTIVE POLITICAL LIFE WILL BE A LOSS TO HIS SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY WHICH HE HAS SERVED SO WELL SINCE HIS UNIVERISTY DAYS. ANDERSEN'S DEGREE IS IN ECONOMICS. HE WAS ALSO THE PRINCIPAL OF ONE OF DENMARK'S NOTABLE LABOR "HIGH SCHOOLS." BUT MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE HAS BEEN DEVEOTED TO SERVING HIS BELOVED SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. HE HAS BEEN FOREIGN MINISTER THIS TIME AROUND SINCE THE RETURN OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO POWER IN FEBRUARY 1975. HE ALSO SERVED AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN'S EARLIER (1971-1973) GOVERNMENT AND WAS EDUCATION MINISTER FROM 1963-68.

4. ALTHOUGH ANDERSEN DID NOT ALWAYS SEE EYE-TO-EYE WITH THE U.S. - PARTICULARLY ON SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE THIRD WORLD IN GENERAL - ANDERSEN HAS BEEN A STRONG FRIEND OF AMERICAN AND THE WEST IN GENERAL. HIS VIEWS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY REPRESENT THE "BEST" THAT THE DANISH PARTY HAS STOOD FOR AND HIS CONCERN FOR THE FATE OF THE LESS-ADVANTAGED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD HAS BEEN GENUINE AND SINCERE.

5. HIS JOB AS SPEAKER OF THE FOLKETING IS A PRESTIGIOUS BUT LARGELY CEREMONIAL ONE. THE PERM UNDER SEC. OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, JORGEN GERSING, TOLD POLCOUNS THIS MORING THAT ANDERSEN INFORMED PRIME MINISTER JORGENSEN 5-6 MONTHS AGAO THAT HE INTENDED TO STEP DOWN AT THE END OF THE DANISH EC PRESIDENCY ON JUNE 30 AND THAT HE HOPED THAT HE MIGHT BE THE PARTY'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOMINEE TO SUCCEED SKYTTE. THIS NOW HAS HAPPENED AND ANDERSEN'S FORMAL ELECTION TO THE SPEAKER'S POSITION IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

6. GERSING ALSO SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER JORGENSEN HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE UP HIS MIND WHOM HE SHOULD NAME AS ANDERSEN'S LONG-TERM SUCCESSOR. PART OF THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE OUTCOME OF TALKS THIS SUMMER WITH PARTIES OF THE CENTER-RIGHT. THOSE MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SUCCESSOR TO ANDERSEN ARE TRANSPORTATION MINISTER KJELD OLESEN (WHO WANTS IT BADLY); PRESENT FINANCE MINISTER KNUD HEINSEN (WHO WILL BE DIFFICULT TO REPLACE); PRESENT COMMERCE MINISTER AND FORMER MINISTER OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, IVAR NORGAARD. PRESENT DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER LISE OSTERGAARD IS REGARD AS AN OUTSIDE CHANCE.

7. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS SPECULATED THAT JORGENSEN WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO TAKE ON THE ADDED RESPONSIBILITY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - EVEN FOR THE SHORT PERIOD TILL SEPT. 1 - GERSING SAID THAT IN REALITY THIS WOULD BE NO GREATLY ADDED BURDEN. THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT "EVENTS" TO THE DANES IN THIS RESPECT ARE THE JULY 6-7 EC SUMMIT IN BREMEN, WHICH JORGENESEN WOULD ATTEND IN ANY CASE AS PRIME MINISTER, AND THE MONTH OF AUGUST WHEN PRACTICALLY ALL OF EUROPE CLOSES DOWN FOR VACATION.

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